

**Town of West Boylston
Finance/CIB Committee
Meeting of March 20, 2023**

A meeting of Fincom and CIB was convened at Town Hall at 6:03 pm . Attending Fincom and CIB members were Chris Berglund, Paul Bohannon, Ray Bricault, Bill Fay, Mary Foley, and Pete Murphy.

Bill Fay moved, seconded by Mary Foley, to approve the minutes of March 13 for Fincom and CIB. All voted in favor, 6-0 for Fincom and 6-0 for CIB.

Lisa Viklund, Senior Center Director, attended the meeting to discuss the budgets:

- The **operating budget** is level funded at \$149,688, with 4 staff members receiving a 2% COLA and step increases, and small budget additions for building maintenance.
- The Food Service program was delayed by a long search for staff. The program is expected to begin soon serving 4 meals per week. The staff will be funded in FY24 from an annual State grant based on the town senior population.
- No outreach worker is included in the FY24 budget.
- No capital needs yet for this new building.

The Fire Chief, Mark Sadowski, presented the Fire budgets:

- A budget letter with relevant Fire data was presented.
- The most significant Fire **operating budget** issue is staffing. The Chief made and submitted a full review of Fire and ambulance staffing, including data from similar towns.
- Ambulance call volume has increased by 67% in the last 2 years, returning to pre-Covid levels. The calls are expected to continue to increase due to increased requests for assistance from Worcester and other surrounding towns, and delays in ER hospital intake. Revenue in FY24 is estimated to increase \$130,000 due to a 7% rate increase and an expected increase in call volume.
- Current Fire staffing does not meet NFPA minimums of 4 per shift. Current staffing is 3 weekdays and 2 nights and weekends, with per diem callouts to supplement to a minimum of 4 for all calls, Fire or ambulance. The FY24 budget proposes adding 3 full time Fire/EMTs to fully staff each shift with the minimum of 4 in a platoon system. Per diem callouts and mutual aid will be used when a larger team is required. Overtime will still be needed on weekends and for sick time, but at a much reduced level. The Fire Union is very supportive of the changes because the overtime has been excessive and hard on personal time.

- The proposed operating budget increase is approximately \$437,000. This increase includes the new staffing (\$300,000), an increase in purchased supplies (\$100,000), and new turnout gear for the new staff (\$37,000). The increase in purchase supplies reflects the FY23 experience. This budget increase has the support of the Town Administrator.
- The Fire **capital budgets** were discussed:
 - FY23 Capital - The replacement Chief car, a Tahoe, has been received and has been used in service, even though the buildout with emergency equipment is not complete.
 - FY23 Capital - The replacement pickup truck is at the dealers, but also needs the emergency equipment buildout.
 - FY23 Capital - The new ambulance ordering documents are ready and will be submitted. Delivery is still estimated as 18 to 24 months.
 - FY24 Turnout Gear - Replacement turnout gear will be required for the current Fire staff this year due to extended lead-times (\$75,000). Some of this cost will likely be offset by grants, but the grant funding schedule is too late to purchase and receive new gear before the expiration dates.
 - FY24 SCBA Bottles - These air bottles for the Scott 4500 air packs will expire in FY25, but must be ordered in FY24 to be received by the expiration date. The cost is \$97,500 firm from a vetted State vendor.
 - FY24 Engine 5 - Replacement of the Engine 5 forestry truck will be submitted as a grant request. There is an opportunity to couple this engine with the defunct tanker truck in an application that has a good chance of approval. The cost of this new truck will be \$450,000.
 - FY24 Generator - A replacement 140 kw generator is again proposed for a cost of \$68,000, including installation and switch gear. This generator will use the existing Propane tank as the fuel source. The electric capacity will service the entire Fire building and some of the needs of the DPW. Questions were raised about the condition and service life of this underground propane tank. The Chief will investigate the tank, but said no problems are expected.
 - FY24 New Fire Station - The Chief is proposing an architectural/engineering study at a cost of \$250,000 to replace the Fire building. The Town Administrator has not agreed to proceed with this study in FY24. A broader building plan is needed from the FISP or other planning boards for the Select Board to consider proceeding.

- FY24 Existing Fire Station - The 10 year phased rehab of the Fire Station has completed the work on the second floor with the exception of the old dispatch room. This room and the first floor renovations remain. The original funding grant was \$150,000. There was an expiration date of June 2019, but this has been indefinitely extended. \$65,175 remains available and the funds can be used for anything having to do with the retrofit of the Fire station. The Chief will review the rehab plan and obtain contractor quotes for further work.

The Town Administrator announced an agreement with the Town of Sterling to share 50% of a full time Facilities Administrator, employed by the Town of Sterling. School facilities are excluded. The Select Board has approved the agreement. Sterling will proceed to find candidates.

The next meeting of Fincom and CIB is March 27 for budget reviews with the Schools and DPW.

Bill Fay moved, Mary Foley seconded, to adjourn the meeting. All voted in favor 6-0.

Meeting adjourned at 8:17 pm.

Pete Murphy
Secretary, Fincom and CIB